



## **COPE endorses Nancy Karigithu for Secretary General of IMO**

5 January 2022

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release to the Public

The Center for Ocean Policy and Economics (COPE) is proud to announce its support for the Republic of Kenya's Candidate for the post of Secretary General for the United Nations' International Maritime Organization (IMO), Ambassador Nancy Karigithu, which she announced during the 129<sup>th</sup> Session of the IMO Council. The Elections for the next IMO Secretary General will be held during the 130<sup>th</sup> Session of IMO's Council, slated for July 2023.

The international maritime industry and the global balance of power is shifting and will bring with it a number of complex consequences, challenges, and opportunities. Major concerns moving into the next decade are climate change, decarbonization, and the preservation and adaptation of a rules-based order to maintain peace and prosperity for all nations participating in the maritime industry. Ambassador Karigithu embodies the calm, strong, transformational power that creates consensus without division. Her continuous actions are impactful in a quiet and humble way and her unique kindness dissolves borders of all types while illuminating the strengths of others.

Ambassador Karigithu would be the first female Secretary General of the IMO and the first from Africa, a remarkable and necessary milestone. Her capacities as a seasoned diplomat, honest broker, and consensus builder are critical to meet this moment. She carries with her the conviction to do what is right and to ensure successful outcomes for all nations, no matter how large or small. COPE is therefore compelled to support this remarkable woman in her ambition to guide the International Maritime Organization as its next Secretary General.

Ambassador Karigithu is currently Kenya's Special Envoy for Maritime & Blue Economy and has enjoyed an illustrious career spanning 34 years in the maritime sector. She holds a bachelor's degree in law from the University of Nairobi, Kenya and a master's degree in International



Maritime law from the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), Malta. She was the first substantive Director General (DG) of the Kenya Maritime Authority, a position she held for nine (9) years. During her tenure as DG, she updated the legal framework for maritime activities in Kenya, developed business plans, annual operating budgets for the maritime administration and generally advised the Government on maritime issues.

She also served as the Chair of the IMO Technical Cooperation Committee for three (3) terms and currently sits on the Boards of Governors of the World Maritime University (WMU), based in Malmo, Sweden, and the IMO-IMLI. Her working experience spans 38 years, 34 of them in the maritime industry.

Previous work experience includes a stint as a State Law Officer and Senior Legal Officer at the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), where she rose to the post of Assistant Corporation Secretary. In 1995 Mrs. Karigithu resigned from KPA to set up a private legal consultancy firm, and for the next eleven years consulted extensively for IMO in sub-Saharan Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the East African Community and the African Union (AU). Between 2004 and 2005, she served as the Maritime Transport Expert for the AU, where she was engaged in advising governments in the region on the setting up of independent maritime administrations and strengthening of maritime legal frameworks.

Ambassador Karigithu is a regular speaker at international conferences and seminars on topics dealing with maritime transport, safety and security, and the strengthening of maritime administrations. For over eighteen years she has been a senior delegate of the Kenya Government to IMO meetings and in this role has been instrumental in the implementation of IMO programs both in Kenya and the African region. Examples include:

- Operationalizing the Mombasa Regional Maritime Coordination Centre in Mombasa Kenya;
- In partnership with IMO, setting up the Association for Women in the Maritime Sector in Eastern & Southern Africa (WOMESA) in pursuance of gender equity and integration of women in the Maritime Sector. WOMESA covers twenty five countries in the region and provides a much needed platform for mentorship and role modeling to support young women entrants in the industry;
- Spearheading and implementing maritime security programs, chief among which has been the Djibouti Code of Conduct for the Suppression of Piracy in the Western Indian Ocean;
- Most recently, championing the development and adoption of the IMO Guidelines on the Prevention and Suppression of the Smuggling of Wildlife on Ships engaged In International Maritime Traffick which were adopted by IMO during the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Facilitation Committee held in May 2022;
- Led the successful bid for Kenya to host the Maritime Technology Cooperation Center for Africa and have continued to Chair the Steering Committee responsible for implementation of programs and pilot projects geared at the elimination of Green House Gasses from the Africa's maritime shipping Industry. MTCC-Africa is a joint EU-IMO project aimed at capacity building for decarbonization of Africa's shipping.



The Center for Ocean Policy and Economics is hosted by the Northeast Maritime Institute – College of Maritime Science (NMI), the only private maritime college in the United States. NMI has worked with over eighty-two nations, and through COPE is facilitating cogent maritime and ocean policy and economic project initiatives linking academic, corporate, non-governmental, and governmental partners to create impactful solutions from its international headquarters in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, USA.

Ambassador Karigithu reflects the mission of COPE and its guiding principles outstandingly: Responsibility, Transparency, Accountability, Sustainability, Innovation, Collaboration, Resilience, and Human Empowerment. Her career proves her commitment to the maritime industry and her ability to lead others. She is humble, kind, gracious, honest, and a remarkable diplomat. Above all else, she loves the maritime industry and all the people who work in it.

We are therefore proud to show our resounding support for Ambassador Karigithu to serve as the next Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization and congratulate her on her candidacy to take the reins of this prestigious international institution.

###

The Center for Ocean Policy and Economics  
32 Washington St.  
Fairhaven, MA USA  
[www.thecope.org](http://www.thecope.org)